



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Food and Drug Administration  
Rockville MD 20857

NOV 19 1999 12:28 PM  
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The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515-3006

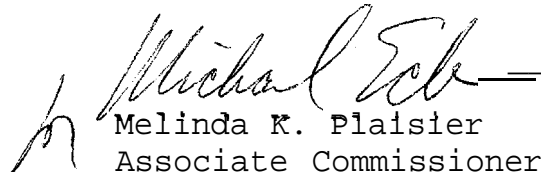
Dear Mr. Pallone:

Thank you for your letter of October 29, 1999, concerning the Food and Drug Administration's (the Agency) proposed rule on refrigeration and safe handling labeling of shell eggs, which was published in the Federal Register of July 6, 1999. You wrote in "... support for proposed language the Department of Health and Human Services put forward on shell egg safety in July." You further support the use of a warning label on raw shell egg cartons.

We appreciate your thoughtful comments on our proposal. Although the comment period for this regulatory proposal closed on September 20, 1999, your comments will be forwarded to the docket for this issue. The Agency does try, as time and resources permit, to accommodate comments received after the comment period.

Please contact us if we may be of any further assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

  
Melinda K. Plaisier  
Associate Commissioner  
for Legislation

cc: Dockets Management Branch  
(Docket No. 98N-1230)

96P-0418

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C788 /ANS

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email: Frank.Pallone@mail.house.gov

http://www.house.gov/pallone

FRANK PALLONE, JR.

6TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

## Congress of the United States

### House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-3006

October 29, 1999

REPLY TO:

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

420 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3006  
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-4671

DISTRICT OFFICES:

504 BROADWAY  
LONG BRANCH, NJ 07740  
(732) 571-1140

67/69 CHURCH ST.  
KILMER SQUARE  
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901  
(732) 249-8892

I.E.I., AIRPORT PLAZA  
1390 RT. 36, #104  
HAZLET, NJ 07730-1701  
(732) 264-9104

The Honorable Donna Shalala  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW - Room 615  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Shalala:

I am writing to express my support for proposed language the Department of Health and Human Services put forward on shell egg safety in July.

It is my understanding that recommendations for proposed language for warning labels to appear on new shell egg cartons have been concluded. It is also my understanding that a final recommendation is expected soon.

As you know, the language published in July by the Department included the following appear on new egg shell cartons

**"SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS:** Eggs may contain harmful bacteria known to cause serious illness, especially in children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems. For your protection, keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly."

Although there may be representations by industry that it is solving food safety threats associated with eggs on its own and the proposed language should therefore be diluted, it is important to keep in mind the complex nature of this threat. The root causes of the growth in illnesses caused by a new generation of pathogens may well be too difficult for the industry alone to manage. Indeed, the Center for Disease Control and prevention recently released a report that found that food borne illnesses strike more than twice as many people than previous estimates suggested.


Until more definitive progress is made in combating food borne illnesses in general as well as food safety threats specific to eggs, it is imperative that consumers are given the opportunity to make the most informed possible decision about the food they eat through the broad dissemination of information. Warning labels are a crucial and efficient way of ensuring the appropriate information about food safety threats reaches the consumer.

To that end, let me state again my support for the use of a warning label on raw shell

No. 99-6900

egg cartons and respectfully request that you preserve the language cited above that was put forward by the Department in July.

Sincerely,

  
Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

11-01-99-0019

CROSS FILE SHEET

File Number:

98N-1230/ C 788

See File Number:

97P-0197/ C 789  
96P-0418/ C 788